THE COMPANION,

AND WEEKLY MISCELLANY.

BY EDWARD EASY, ESQ.

—"*A safe* COMPANION, *and an* EASY *Friend.*"—Pope.—

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ON MODERN CRITICISM.

Then without mercy did thy wrath make way,
And arts and artists all became thy prey;
Then didst thou trample on establish'd rules
And proudly level'd all the ancient schools,
Condemn'd those works which praise thro' ages grac'd,
Which you had never seen, or could not taste.

CHURCHILL.

Mr. Easy,

HOW often does man step beyond those limits which nature with a contracted hand has prescribed him. Frivolous and vain, he imagines himself capacitated to converse with fluency and ease on subjects far beyond his narrow intellectual faculties. How often will the fopling dare to soar with Newton to the boundless realms of ether; and, seated in the chair of ideal greatness, measure the expansion of that great man's soul by the indigested crudities of his own; and often arraign at the bar of ignorance and folly the majestic sublimity of an Epic or the mild softness of an humbler poet: and when traversing the poetic fields of fairy fancy will mistake the fascinating tint of rainbow-colouring for strength of imagination and loftiness of thought. Led by the mellifluous harmony of sound, he mistakes words for ideas, and the well fingered line for boldness of expression.* 'Tis a fact, demonstrably true, that no man should attempt to criticise the productions of a poet who never trod the same path of energetic fiction, or walked in the same road of softer eloquence. Is the mighty genius of a Homer, which rises transcendantly majestic, competent to form a just and accurate opinion of the sonnets of a Petrarch? could the humbler mind of Prior speak with propriety of the bold flights of Milton? To effect this Homer must contract the energy of his own mind, and Prior dilate the power of his.

The one would look with contempt upon the other; and the latter, dazzled by surrounding light, would see objects different from their real form. As well might the roundness of the circle assume the equiangular termination of the square, or the plough-boy decide the merits of the Corinthian architect. An opinion may be formed by all; the mind is free and may cherish its own conceptions; but the man of sense will be cautious in expressing them: for how few will take them current. But the ignorant man, with noisy roughness, accuses, argues and condemns indiscriminately, and takes a pleasure in the task. The bed of Procrustes reduced the body to a particular size; but he would make the thoughts of all congenial with his own. Too often have I witnessed, with painful anxiety for the incautious rambler, this itch for criticism, which runs in idle humours through the mind, and may be communicated by thought. Most men, more apt to imitate the folly than the wisdom of their fellows, adopt their ideas, re-echoing them at every opportunity.—Because Johnson, that great colossus of learning, bestriding the literary world has spoke, his successors dare not think. Municipal regulations may admit coercion; but learning should acknowledge none. Science is a republic, and her productions the common property of all: all then may think without cringing to the rod of literary tyranny; but no one may infringe the rights of others, which are always equal to his own. Because critical reviewers may have condemned a work and detracted innocently† from its merit, am I to restrain the ideas it has ex-

* Alluding to some poets who count on their fingers the measure of each respective line.

† If incapability (in a critic) of judging may be termed innocence, then may an ignorant Reviewer innocently detract from the merits of an author's works.

cited and repress the opinions I may have formed? Perhaps the very mind which dictated the paragraph, was incapable of feeling like the censured author. Only congenial souls should speak of works relatively the same; they will discover real beauties and defects, which the more inanimate or lively author may have passed by. To produce harmonious sounds in music, the strings of the instrument must be in unison; and to form a just opinion of the writer the reader should be in a fit aptitude of soul. No colour can appear to equal advantage in all the varying shades of light. No man can be the centre of the arts and sciences,—and by an universal versatility of thought form correct ideas on every subject, and at all times. But there is a certain description of men who, regardless of what I have here advanced, will condemn unheard (perhaps unread) the mental efforts of all whose names have penetrated the veil of ignorance. I would not condemn an error of judgment; but I would condemn the inconsiderate dwarf who proudly would raise his needle lance in opposition to the ponderous sword of the giant. The pigmy would be guilty of intemperate rashness; the ideal critic of impudent conceit. Ideotism should not wield the important sceptre of royalty, nor ignorance wear the diadem of criticism. The time has been when the investigation of an authors's pretensions to merit, was considered arduous; it was thought that the critic should possess an intimate acquaintance with foreign languages and works, in order that each flower might properly be deemed exotic or indigenous. But now, every scribbler fancies himself a critic; he seizes his pen with superstitious enthusiasm (and he is not the least condemnable of visionaries) to defend some favourite, or condemn some obnoxious, author. He finds beauties where none exist, and praises because he was predetermined to praise; and é converso: On one occasion he writes in the language of panegyric, not in the bold freedom of impartial thought; on another, from the want of congeniality of ideas, he will decry the writings of another, dwell with malignant triumph on each sinking line, pursuing word by word the pages of his victim, until he thinks the author's stile, arguments and ideas are as empty as he has proved himself to be. Zoilus wrote like him in the infuriate moment of envy and hatred; but Zoilus is no more. The Homeromaotix is forgotten amid the lapse of intervening time, and the Iliad is still admired. Would to heaven these men could see in a true mirror their own reflected likenesses; they would then be silent.* YELSE.

* This production of our yet esteemed friend was *in type* previous to the arrival of a note which we were sorry to see. *Ed.*

THE BY-STANDER—No. I.

—Hæc studia adolescentiam alunt, senectutem oblectant, secundas ornant, adversis perfugium ac solatium præbent. CICERO.

The desire of communicating the knowledge which he possesses to his fellow creatures, appears to be an inherent principle in man. For this he was endued with intellectual powers, and the faculty of making himself intelligible to his species. Without this admirable quality, the world would now be overgrown with the weeds of ignorance and superstition, and those discoveries which have deified their projectors, remained embossed in the womb of time or sunk with that genius from which they emanated. None can more fully appreciate its merits, than those who have benefited by it. Every different profession in the world has some principles which it can communicate to others; and as the mind of man has its own perfection continually in view, there are none so illiterate, but from whom some trifle may be learnt to add to its knowledge. A man should therefore never despise him, whose mind has not a high a grade of perfection as his own. There are passages in some books of no celebrity or of little repute, which have diffused pleasing sensations in their readers and led their wandering ideas to the contemplation of some object which else would have remained unobserved or unregarded. On this account no production, how obscure soever its author, should be stampt with the mark of stupidity and impotence, until diligently perused and critically analysed.

The indulgence of the reader, is therefore prayed for a few essays to be emitted under the title of a *By-stander*. Blame not his prurience for scribbling—it is the general failing of civilized man: Condemn not his productions—they may contain some scintillations worthy of regard: In fine, hiss not a new performer at his *debut* on the stage of literature; he may improve and display fine specimens of good acting.

If the above professions are well received, and Mr. Easy will condescend to father this bantling and appropriate an occasional corner in his useful miscellany to the lucubrations of a *By-stander*, he will essay his strength to coerce and castigate the licentious, amuse and delight the fair, and (he flatters himself) in a small degree, improve youth in those studies, which the motto declares to be "Cherish youth, delight old age, ornament prosperity and afford an asylum and solace in adversity." And if he can attain his object and cause a smile from beauty, a blush from the thoughtless libertine, or a sigh for past misdemeanours from the abandoned; then shall he reap the full reward of all his labour and enjoy an intellectual

feast, prized above the luxurious viands of epicures or the dulcified beverage of the voluptuous. But when shall that period arrive? will it ever arrive? perhaps not; his paltry productions may never be perused with so much attention, as to work amendment; or perhaps they will be overlooked in the superior essays which crowd the files of the Companion. His sole consolation will then be, that he has exerted himself for the edification of your readers, and his inferiority of genius, has occasioned his exclusion from the participation of accomplishing the great work.

But the patriot regards not what difficulties he has to encounter, when the service of his country impels his arm; and why should an essayist shrink, though his endeavours may not be as serviceable as he could desire. If Mr. Easy but smile on my labours, the hydra is vanquished.

D

Mr. Easy,

Your repeated professions that you are willing to overlook the lesser faults of such as are desirous to share the pleasures and profits of your company, have induced me to expect that you will introduce me to your friends and acquaintance without looking for many compliments.

You will oblige me by informing them that I am a person who owes the little talent I possess in literature and the consequent small reputation which I have in the circle of my acquaintance, principally to apparently trifling incidents; and to the kindness of some friends, who have indulged me, with access to their company, and libraries. I suspect I should incur the disgrace of being deemed an egotist were I to enumerate the advantages which I have derived in this way. Permit me, therefore, to wave the subject, and suggest to such of your acquaintance, as are in a capacity and desirous, to follow Socrates's best course of life, that is, to do good, a plan upon which I think they may do some.

The too prevalent corruption of the manners of youth, is no doubt a cause of serious regret to many, whose plans they are soon to fill. How often do we hear parents complaining of the depravity of their children? How often do they anticipate the squandering of their estates?—the ruin of their families?—"but what can we do?" is the common enquiry: "how can we help it?"—It is a serious question, and perhaps deserves a serious answer.

It is necessary to know the cause of an evil of this kind before we prescribe a cure for it. Human nature is frail; the youth, in consequence of inexperience, are peculiarly subject to its frailties. It is therefore necessary, in order to govern youth in a proper manner to recur to the days of our youth—to take upon us those frailties to which they are subject. There are in youth a great diversity of inclinations. All, no doubt, have some good ones: let these be watched and cherished. The effects of custom are very powerful, and I am persuaded that if those who are advanced in life would condescend to encourage, lead, and assist youth, while ductile, in useful and honourable pursuits, particularly in their studies, it would be a mean of preserving them from many of those extravagancies into which they are so apt to run. There is nothing more pleasant than the pursuit of knowledge, when the mind is once habituated thereto. But it is with youth in their studies, as with the Indians in regard to the cultivation of their lands, "*they know not how to begin.*"

Those who are intrusted with the tuition of children, and are concerned with a considerable number, have not that opportunity to discover the bent of their inclinations, their juvenile peculiarities, as others who are acquainted with them in their families; and children frequently receive, on their first entrance into schools, indelible prejudices against scholastic pursuits. Hence it is, that at that time of life when they might be engaged in them with the greatest pleasure, at the same time becoming qualified for future usefulness, their active minds being unoccupied, they are exposed, at the mercy of every current, and are frequently swept down into the ocean of oblivion.

A spirit of emulation is natural to youth; but it is frequently exercised in an ignoble manner, for want of that care in parents and others which I would recommend: it might be applied to a noble purpose. The image of the manner, in which I have sometimes been exercised with my little associates is now fresh in my memory; and though I make my own pleasures the subject of my exclamation, I can but exclaim, What a pleasing sight! A number of boys collected, and standing up in a private family, emulous to excel in spelling, or in reading? Nor is it necessary to confine our incitements to emulation of this kind, to infantile years: it would be no disgrace to adolescency or even to puberty if it were regulated by discreet and judicious persons. Even after we have arrived to the years of manhood, while yet our passions are warm and our opinions unsettled, and fluctuating (as they frequently are,) the countenance and advice of disinterested persons, who have experienced the various vicissitudes of life, are calculated to be of singular benefit.

The distribution of useful books is another subject to which I beg leave to call some attention. It is an happy privilege which we enjoy, perhaps above any other people, that we are free from any shackles upon enquiry; that

there is no restraint upon the distribution, or use of books. But at the same time that we prize this privilege, it is necessary to guard the rising generation against that torrent of seduction, which flows in the lines of the novelist and romancer. Even amongst books of a different kind, some are no doubt better calculated for usefulness than others: whence it frequently happens that young persons who are fond of reading, by taking up every publication that comes in their way, are perplexed with a jumble of ideas;—have their heads full, and know very little. Were such persons as are qualified, sufficiently careful, to excite in youth an emulation in useful studies, such as history, geography, arithmetic, geometry, &c. to furnish them with suitable books for the prosecution of such studies; not forgetting in the mean time, christian morality; it would give them a taste too noble to be satisfied with that imagery of pleasures, never to be realized, which frequently engrosses their attention, to the exclusion of every honourable pursuit; debases their minds, and finally ends in miserable disappointment.

I cannot, Mr. Easy, conclude without requesting that you will remind your friends, when you visit them again, how extensive our country is, what a vast field we have for the exercise of genius; that all have an opportunity to do as much good as they please; (and it were a great pity if any should be found not qualified to do some) especially that the obscurity of any bright geniuses should not deprive us of their labours in promoting the common good.

INCOGNITUS.

THE CENSOR—No. I.

Mr. Easy,

I have always been of the same opinion as Sterne, with regard to Health, that it is an inestimable blessing without which life would scarcely be desirable. Our own *experience* will convince us that it is intimately associated with the happiness of man; *reason* will teach us that it has a powerful effect upon the exertions of the understanding. For from the connexion that subsists between the body and the mind, the latter must necessarily be affected in all its operations by the situation of the former. While the body therefore remains in a proper state of health, the faculties of the mind can be exercised and its functions performed in the manner which was originally intended. The passions are kept in that state which is necessary for the acquisition of true felicity, and cheerfulness, the usual companion of health, gives a zest for the enjoyment of life.—On the other hand, when the external organs are injured, the operation of those faculties which immediately depend upon and communicate with them, must in the same manner be affected. And of what advantage is learning or power to a man who is destitute of this enjoyment? The wisest statesman and the most profound philosopher, who have spent their lives in the acquisition of knowledge; the monarch and the hero, who have obtained the admiration of mankind and who have arrived at the summit of earthly grandeur, when deprived of health, are incapable of enjoying the fruits of their labour, or of affording any advantage to themselves or to the world. For these reasons the preservation of so invaluable a blessing should be an object of the first consideration, and every thing which will tend in any manner to endanger or destroy it should be carefully avoided. This is a duty which every one owes to himself; it is a duty which he owes to the community; it is a duty prescribed by the laws of nature and reason.

Such being the case, it must be a subject of serious regret to every person of a philanthropic disposition to witness the licentiousness and irregularities which have of late become so prevalent in our country: irregularities which if continued, will strike at the foundation of morality and will undoubtedly be productive of the most distressing consequences. In investigating the causes which have led to this extraordinary change, I am induced to believe that it has not been entirely owing to us; but that many of these disorders so repugnant to morality and so incompatible with our plain but dignified manners, have been in a great measure introduced by foreigners. It is impossible that the sentiments of so many of our countrymen should have *naturally* become corrupt in so short a time. The true cause in my opinion is, that our legislators who had themselves experienced tyranny, after recovering their liberty, with the magnanimity which has always distinguished the advocates of freedom and which is an inherent and fundamental characteristic of our constitution, resolved that this country should be open to the resort of all who wished to enjoy the blessings of independence. Foreigners have by these means been admitted to our privileges, and into the bosom of our cities; they have been cherished by the generosity of our laws, and an asylum has been opened to all who were oppressed by the iron rod of power. In return for our friendship, practices have been introduced contrary to the general sentiments of our country. This return is not what we had a right to expect. But if *gratitude* has not influenced *them*, at least let *pride* prevent *us* from countenancing such innovations.

I would not be understood to implicate the whole body of foreigners, for this would be not only untrue but absurd. This however will not invalidate the truth of

proposition that many of our vices are of foreign extraction. Whether we are to attribute the origin of *gambling*, (which is the principal subject of the succeeding number) to this source I am at a loss to determine; but that it has been baneful in its effects and if not checked will be of real injury to the community, cannot I think be denied. In my next, this subject shall be more fully discussed.

CENSOR.

Mr. Easy,

In your 14th number, a letter or essay, from Miss Eliza Would-be-knowing struck my attention so forcibly, that I immediately resolved to enter the lists, against all calumniators, whether cased in mail, or naked as Picts.

The family of the SOFTHEADS, of which Eliza speaks, are undoubtedly of great antiquity. They have often worn the royal purple; been employed to dethrone kings, and to destroy republics. 'Tis a matter of notoriety, that some of the Softheads were among the first who emigrated to this country, when it was covered with woods, and inhabited by savages, and that we owe to them the respectable families of the Emptyheads, and Flat-heads, and Paperskulls, and Thickskulls, and Numskulls, many of whom play so distinguished a part, on the great stage of politics.

My grand-father, PETER SOFTHEAD, lived to the age of eighty. When about sixty, he fell in love with one of the most celebrated beauties of that day, to whom he was soon after joined in the holy bands of matrimony; as appears from the church records. My father, NINNY SOFTHEAD, was the youngest of three sons, which sprung from this union, and sole heir to the family estate, his brothers dying soon after their birth. I hope I may say, without a blush, that my father, who has been honoured with a commission of justice of the peace, supports both on and off the bench, the dignity of the Softheads.

I submit it, Mr. Easy, to your sagacity, to solve, whether there is any thing in my conjecture, that the WOULD-BE-KNOWINGS, are a collateral branch of the Softhead family? I am inclined to this opinion, by perceiving in Eliza's performance, the same beauties, which distinguished the writings of my uncle Simon Softhead, junior. If my Uncle, for example, steals into the papers *as a lady*, every person who reads his excellent essays, perceives at a single glance, how happily he adapts his phrases and metaphors, to the female character. If he endeavours to correct a fellow labourer in the vineyard of letters, for some omission in addressing the fair sex, he threatens "to make every joint crack, and every bone ache," or "to shake him into a perfect jelly." Here we find a sample of the true female style, only to be equalled by his "essence of gridiron," which he thinks (all-efficacious as it is in the cure of bruises) would not effect a cure on this occasion.

As my chief object in writing this, is to see myself in print, to contribute my aid to maintain the dignity of the Softheads, and to idle away an hour or two of languor, I will tell you what I saw and heard the other day.

I was waiting for a friend, who had stepped into a shop to purchase segars, when two modern astronomers, with their "quizzing" glasses, accidentally met at the corner of the street where I was standing. They soon discovered that both had been attracted by the same power of gravitation, and had brought their telescopes for the same purpose, namely, to observe sundry transits, which were to take place on that day. Some minutes however elapsed before any transit took place—those minutes our astronomers passed in rubbing and preparing their telescopes.—One observed, that philosophers had nearly agreed that those heavenly bodies called young ladies, "have fallen from the sky." There are three opinions said the other, on this point. One set of philosophers, you know, have contended that, they are natives of the Georgium Sidus, from the analogy their complexion bears to the snow, which according to them, perpetually covers that planet: A second set, insist upon their greater affinity to Saturn, from their known attachment to rings. The third set, which are by far the most numerous, maintain, that we are indebted to Venus for these divinities. Does not the transparency of the atmosphere, with which they are surrounded, and their airs and manners, fix beyond a doubt, that they belong to a warmc limate?

J. SOFTHEAD.

Now prove your patience, gentle ladies all!
Nor let on me your heavy anger fall.
'Tis truth I tell, though not in phrase refin'd:
Though blunt my tale, yet honest is my mind. POPE.

TO LUCRETIA.

Having read with emotions of pity, in the last number of the Companion, your plaintive communication, I take this opportunity to condole with you; and cordially hope, that you will consider the following remarks as flowing from a source of pure friendship.

It is a lamentable thing to observe discontent and chagrin in the paths of Hymen; but alas! when we take a view of the various passions and prejudices of mankind, the cause is too conspicuous to pass by unobserved, and in-

deed too affecting to animadvert without emotions of profound regret. In the formidable train of evils matrimony is subject to, resulting from these inordinate passions and prejudices, are pride and ambition, of which the female mind is equally susceptible; and which betrays them into fancies equally whimsical and destructive to connubial felicity. Hence, most likely, some of those calamities you so bitterly complain of; inasmuch as you say, "The remembrance of what I formerly *was*, and, had I acted prudently, might *now* be, makes me think myself the most miserable of beings."

Inasmuch as "love produces matrimony, matrimony ought to produce love;" but woeful experience teaches us, that this is not always the case, for every husband is not an Ulysses in point of fidelity and truth, nor a Socrates in philosophical energy; nor is every wife like your namesake of old, more partial to the peaceful and virtuous employments of frugal industry, than spending their time in indolence and voluptuousness. If giddy mortals would but recollect, that matrimony is a friendship contracted for life, and learn to keep affection alive by mutual goodnature, constancy and love, it would have a tendency to obviate those frivolous controversies which give rise to *connubial warfare*, so offensive to the peace and quiet of "neighbours."

Pardon my candour! Your turn of mind seems calculated to make you miserable; inasmuch as "trifles light as air,"* I find, tend to irritate, grieve and perplex you. Be assured, that so long as you continue in such a disposition, discontent and chagrin will be your attendants.—Remember that Divine Wisdom has placed your happiness in your own hands; and therefore, it rested (and yet may) with yourself, either to be happy or wretched.—If you are bent upon indulging in all the extravagant habits, manners and customs of the fashionable throng, without means to support it, you will live a stranger to happiness; inasmuch as disappointments and vexation will attend you. In order, therefore, to obviate these ridiculous notions, and to correct those idle habits you seem to have acquired under the misguided tuition of your too indulgent parents, let me beg your attention particularly to the following remarks, which may convince you, that that happiness you seem to despair of is still within your grasp.

That there are certain pains and calamities entailed upon human nature is unquestionable; such as are produced by physical sufferings, and the deprivation of near and dear friends and relations; but these are generally of a transient nature, and may be softened by the benign influence of religion. But on the other hand, the calamities occasioned by our own incoherent conduct are daily renewed by an incessant gratification of ridiculous passions, and are doubly cruel, as the infelicity produced thereby, seldom excites the commisseration of others. People of this cast are mostly capricious and inconstant in the extreme; to-day their hearts seem to overflow with affection, and to-morrow cold as ice: what they dwelt on yesterday with rapturous delight, to-day is cast off as insipid and good-for-nothing: In a word, they are entirely subject to the changeable government of whim; and therefore, it is absolutely impossible that such characters can be happy themselves, or promote the happiness of those with whom they are united in wedlock. Now, Madam, supposing that these ridiculous qualities assisted in some measure to cause those misfortunes you complain of, in all the plenitude of woe (which, from a knowledge of female excellence I would willingly hope, is not the case) I would recommend, that you use every exertion to correct these propensities by dint of reasoning and reflection, and by attaching yourself to those honourable and peaceful employments whieh devolve on you as a parent and a wife, and determining to pursue them with energy, you will forget by degrees, those moments, the recollection of which is *one* cause of your present unhappiness. You will find by experience, that every virtuous effort made to this end, will produce a victory of joyful happiness.

With respect to your husband, who, it seems, you married more from resentment to the world, than love for the man, it will be no small undertaking to christianize him. An "Honey-moon husband," or *human-monster*, is, I believe, an animal not much known to naturalists in this country; yet there are of this species; and the treatment suitable for them is difficult of definition. I would, however, advise her who has been so unfortunate as to have fallen into the dreadful fangs of a being, capable of maltreating a *woman*, to practice all the fortitude she is mistress of, that she may bear with christian patience and resignation the heaviest evil to which the most thoughtless of her sex is subject. He is a being so truly detestable, that I cannot speak patiently of him; and yet you must, Madam, blame yourself for having fallen under all this weight of woe. For his lesser faults you may chide reasonably, but it were almost vain to hope for amendment.

By these means you *may* render your future progress in domestic life, comparatively happy. When natural good sense, happy dispositions and constancy, unite in matri-

* The Editor cannot acquiesce in the opinion, that to have such an husband as Lucretia's, is a trifling grievance.

mony; they cannot fail to make the union pleasing and agreeable, even in poverty: Yes,

"when souls each other draw;
When love is liberty, and nature law;
All then is full possessing and possess'd
No craving void left aching in the breast:
E'en thought meets thought, ere from the lips it past,
Each warm wish springs mutual from the heart:
This sure is bliss; if bliss on earth there be.

But on the contrary, when persons of opposite tempers and dispositions are bound in Hymen's chains, it is scarcely possible for them to live happy, even under the most favourable circumstances of affluence; inasmuch as their dissimilitude of minds, ever prone to opposition, are continually vexing and perplexing each other. H.

TO READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

The By-Stander No. 2 is received. He is earnestly desired to proceed.

Zophyrus' second number is received; his first was not forgotten. We thank Zophyrus for these papers.

D's poetic note to a young lady is received.

We cannot read the signature to the favour accompanying the verses occasioned by playing at whist.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

THE TWO PIGEONS.

Two pigeons once, a happy pair,
The offspring of one tender care;
Within a barn had built their nest,
Intending there for life to rest:
Content and love they found at home,
Nor e'er express'd a wish to roam.

The spring and summer now had pass'd,
And winter, with his chilly blast
Had frozen o'er the little rills,
And whiten'd all the neighb'ring hills:
No more, responsive down the vale,
Was heard the black-birds ev'ning tale;
Each songster fled the cheerless grove,
To milder climes, afar, to rove.

Without one care to fright their rest,
Of ev'ry little wish possess'd,
Our happy pair, in snug retreat,
Secure from cold and driving sleet;
Quite unconcern'd, forever gay,
In blisses past the hours away:
Each morn the fair Maria sped,
With choicest dainties to their shed;
Her lov'd approach they quick descry,
And round their guardian mistress fly,
With seeming smiles, the fair they greet,
And peck the crumbs from off her feet:

Thus pass'd their lives from day to day:
Sure never birds so bless'd as they!
Now spring once more, with vernal bloom,
Had chas'd away the winter's gloom;
The frost had melted in the rills,
And clad in green were all the hills:
Each songster tun'd his early throat,
To swell the long forgotten note;
And every shepherd sung his lay,
To welcome in the rosy may.

Our lovers, too, the change confess'd,
And often left their humble nest;
Together o'er the fields they flew,
And mark'd a thousand beauties new:
When thus with sudden joy elate,
The lover, kind, bespoke his mate:

Behold what sweet enchantment reigns,
What flowers bedeck these happy plains!
Oh! how unlike this charming bloom,
Is yonder barn's detested gloom;
Where, pent from every fond delight,
We've slumber'd out an age of night:
Why should not we, like others, roam,
And fix, where choice directs, our home?
To taste in other woods and fields,
The sweets that nature freely yields?—
He paus'd, while thus the gentle bride,
To him, in accents mild, reply'd:

Whence springs this strange desire, my love,
To leave thy native barn and grove,
To quit those walls, of late, so kind,
When rain, and hail, and driving wind,
In vain assail'd our peaceful nest,
And nightly strove to break our rest?
When snow and ice conceal'd the ground,
And food was no where to be found;
Did not Maria's care befriend,
And all our little wants attend?
Besides, the spring will soon be o'er,
The summer, too, will be no more;
And where can we expect to find
A barn so warm, and friend so kind?

All this, the lover quick reply'd,
Seems well with other ways untry'd;—
For will not every bird agree,
And say they're far more bless'd than we?
Else why do *they* delight to rove,
And taste the sweets of every grove?
Come, come, my love, make no delay,
But instant let us wing our way;
Wherever nature most invites,
And taste a thousand new delights.

In vain the pleading fair replies,
In vain her utmost efforts tries:—
But fix'd resolve, within his breast,
Still baffled every fond request.—
Alike in vain, the lover strove,
His sorrowing Bride's consent to move;

'Till tir'd he gives persuasion o'er,
And sues to urge her flight no more.

Farewell, he cried, since so unkind,
You still intend to stay behind ;
And may your days in smiles be dress'd,
And all your little wishes bless'd !
This said he bade a fond adieu,
And instant o'er the fallow flew :
The widow'd bird in sorrow mourns,
And pensive to the barn returns.

Meanwhile the lover, blithe and gay,
To distant worlds pursues his way ;
With rapid wing the air he cleaves,
While big with pride his bosom heaves :
Now, borne impetuous on the wind,
He leaves his native fields behind ;
Till tir'd with many an idle round,
He drops fatigu'd upon the ground :

Refresh'd, again from earth he springs,
And shakes with joy his buxom wings ;
For three long days he urg'd his flight,
Without one care to mar delight.
The fourth, when ev'ning drew her veil,
Of pleasing twilight o'er the dale ;
Again his flight he downward bends,
And once more on the ground descends.
An ample field, of berries, nigh,
Delicious, greet his longing eye ;
Pleas'd, he accepts the offer'd feast,
And then betakes himself to rest.

Next morn ere Phœbus shot his ray,
Of orient red across the way ;
From sweet repose he joyful wakes,
And quick his mossy couch forsakes :
And now before his ravish'd eyes,
Unnumber'd scenes of beauty rise ;
Of lawns and bow'rs, and fairy groves,
Smooth gliding streams, and sweet alcoves !

Ye gods, he cries, what grandeur reigns,
What charms pervade these happy plains !
Oh ! here could I, forever, dwell,
And bid to all the world farewell.

While thus he spoke, in quest of prey,
An hungry hawk pursued his way ;
When lo ! our musing friend he spies,
And quick as thought upon him flies.

Alarm'd, the wounded victim reels,
And through the air convulsive wheels ;
Now far aloft his flight he bends,
And now, with rapid wing descends ;—
Where'er he turns, now high now low,
Close in his track, so turns the foe :
And now half spent, and sore distress'd,
While terrors shook his little breast;

With deep remorse he calls to mind
His native barn now left behind,
Whose walls, if near, might still befriend,
And succour in his misery lend.

While thoughts like these his bosom tear,
With frantick wing he cuts the air ;
Resolv'd to end at once the strife,
And try by speed to save his life.

Now swift, and swifter than the wind,
He leaves the lawns and groves behind ;
Till sick at heart he pants for breath,
And shuddering waits the coming death.

Ah ! sure some guardian angel nigh,
Beheld thee with a pitying eye ;
And mov'd to see thee so distress'd,
With sudden hopes reviv'd thy breast !—

As faint and breathless thus he flew,
A shatter'd oak, before his view
Arose, all lonely on the plain :
There still some slender hopes remain ;—
For now when fate seems hov'ring o'er,
And all his speed avails no more ;
With bounding heart and ravish'd eyes,
A hollow in the trunk he spies,
And furious through the crevice flies.
There all the long and tedious day,
As weak and faint, he gasping lay :
Again his home now far remov'd,
And all the scenes he once had lov'd ;
With cruel, and remorseful smart,
By turns assail his anguish'd heart.

Next morn, quite feeble , forth he crawls,
Half famish'd, from his prison walls ;
Resolv'd, to give his wanderings o'er,
And seek his native fields once more.

With this intent a short repast,
He takes, and spreads his wings in haste ;
While round he throws an anxious eye,
Still fearful of some danger nigh.

Thus maim'd, for many a cheerless day,
With toil-worn wings he urg'd his way ;
O'er unknown fields and forests drear :—
When sudden to his eyes appear,
The well known barn, and aged oaks,
While near the cottage chimney smokes :
His gentle mate her truant spies,
And meets him with a fond surprise ;
Close to his wounded side she press'd,
And smooth'd with care his ruffl'd breast :
Thy kindness, quite o'erwhelm'd he cried,
My constant—sweet, forgiving bride !
Shall teach my heart while life remains,
No more to sigh for distant plains ;
Shall cheer me, in whatever lot,
And never—never, be forgot.—
He kept his word, and from that day,
Again was never known to stray.—

—LEAN